

Alliance Clips and Retiree News November 17, 2011

Alliance Mentions

Workers Rally to Protect Social Security, Medicare
Fox Phoenix
November 16, 2011

Retired workers rallied in Phoenix Wednesday, protesting possible cuts to social security and Medicare. They are urging Arizona Senator Jon Kyl, who on the debt super committee, to look elsewhere to find the \$1.2 trillion in government spending cuts. Older citizens are against raising the age of retirement in order to receive Medicare benefits, and they're fighting to save social security.

<http://www.myfoxphoenix.com/dpp/news/politics/workers-rally-to-protect-social-security-11-16-2011>

Iowa GOP voters: Don't cut Social Security
Hannah Hess
Times-Republican
November 11, 2011

According to an AARP poll, Republican voters don't want cuts made to Social Security. By nearly a 3 to 1 one margin, the survey shows that GOP caucusgoers, including those aligned with the tea party, would prefer withdrawing troops from Iraq or Afghanistan as an alternative to route to digging out of the nation's \$14-trillion deficit. The AARP commissioned GS Strategy Group of Boise, Idaho, to survey 400 likely Iowa Republican caucusgoers from Oct. 17-18. Results show 64.5 percent oppose cutting Social Security benefits to lower the deficit, with a margin of error of 4.9 percent.

<http://www.timesrepublican.com/page/content.detail/id/544342/Iowa-GOP-voters---Don-t-cut-Soci---.html>

Medicare

Deficit Panel Tussles Over Medicare
Siobhan Hughes
Wall Street Journal
November 17, 2011

Democrats on the super committee have indicated that they would be willing to raise Medicare premiums and shift costs onto those who can afford the program more easily, such as through testing recipients' means to pay. That is one part of a package to reduce deficits with \$1 trillion of spending cuts and amounts to a big concession by Democrats. To bring what they see as fairness and balance to the deal, Democrats also want \$1 trillion of revenues over a decade, including \$650 billion of tax increases. Republicans say that the Medicare changes don't go far enough and that Democrats are asking too much by tying the Medicare changes to \$1 trillion of new revenues. For their part, Republicans say they are the party that has made major concessions by offering \$250 billion in tax revenues. A side issue is that Democrats have treated the cuts to the Medicare program as a spending cut. Republicans view premium increases as additional revenue.

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203699404577044002221475054.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

5 questions about the GOP's plan to privatize Medicare

Mark Miller

Reuters

November 17, 2011

The Congressional Super Committee negotiations are coming down to the wire, and Republicans are demanding that Medicare privatization be included in any final budget deal. Even if the Super Committee process stalls, the future of Medicare will be a key issue in the 2012 Presidential race, and any restructuring of the program would impact billions of dollars of healthcare spending and tens of millions of beneficiaries. How would privatization impact seniors? How would benefits change, and what would it mean for seniors' cost of healthcare? Here are answers to five key issues.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/11/17/usa-medicare-questions-idUSN1E7AG0V720111117>

Study: Copays for Medicare brand-name drugs to rise in 2012; wide differences among plans

Associated Press

Washington Post

November 16, 2011

Copays for preferred brand-name drugs will increase by 40 percent on average next year, and non-preferred brands will average nearly 30 percent more, according to the study by Avalere Health. Avalere, a data analysis firm that serves industry and government, says its findings show that Medicare prescription plans are steadily shifting costs to chronically ill patients who need more expensive kinds of medications. At the same time, the plans are trying to keep costs in check for the majority whose conditions can be managed with less-expensive generics.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/study-copays-for-medicare-brand-name-drugs-to-rise-in-2012-wide-differences-among-plans/2011/11/16/gIQAYZknRN_story.html

Social Security

In Webster City, Michele Bachmann calls for raising eligibility age for Social Security

Jason Noble

2012 Iowa Caucuses

November 16, 2011

Michele Bachmann called for raising the eligibility age for Social Security on currently middle aged people in a town-hall meeting in Webster City. Bachmann claims that “The change is necessary because Social Security was never intended to provide benefits for “20 or 30” years, she said. That’s the case today because while the eligibility age – 65 – has not changed since the program began eight decades ago, the life expectancy has risen substantially.”

<http://caucuses.desmoinesregister.com/2011/11/16/michele-bachmann-calls-for-raising-eligibility-age-for-social-security-in-webster-city/>

How Income Inequality Undermines Social Security's Finances

Daniel Marans

Huffington Post

November 16, 2011

The Evolution of Social Security’s Taxable Maximum, a recent study by Kevin Whitman and Dave Shoffner from the Social Security Administration's Office of Retirement Policy, shows how rising income inequality has greatly increased the amount of earnings above the tax-max, depriving Social Security of much-needed revenue and shifting a larger share of its financing onto middle -- and low-income workers. The rising income inequality has caused the percentage of the country’s total earning covered by the tax max to steadily decline. If politicians want to completely restore Social Security to long-range balance, they should consider scrapping the cap entirely. That is what, poll after poll reports, the American people overwhelmingly favor.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daniel-marans/how-income-inequality-und_b_1095011.html

Lifestyle

Census projects fast-growing 90-plus age group will quadruple to 8 million in US by midcentury

Washington Post

November 17, 2011

People who are 90 or older have nearly tripled in number since 1980, to 1.9 million, according to Thursday’s first-ever census numbers on the age group. The oldest old are projected to increase to 8.7 million by midcentury — or one in 10 older Americans. That’s a big change from over a century ago, when fewer than 100,000 people reached 90. Figures show that smaller states had the highest shares of their older Americans who were at least 90. North Dakota led the list, with about 7 percent of its 65-plus population over 90. It was followed by Connecticut, Iowa and

South Dakota. In absolute numbers, California, Florida and Texas led the nation in the 90-plus population, each with more than 130,000.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/census-projects-fast-growing-90-plus-age-group-will-quadruple-to-8-million-in-us-by-midcentury/2011/11/17/gIQAGAYXUN_story.html